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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ranger LeMaster,

I am writing in support of the proposed Forest-wide Oak and Woodland Restoration Project on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. As a volunteer with the Ruffed Grouse Society, I am particularly interested in wildlife habitat enhancement that benefits Early Successional Habitat dependent species, such as the Ruffed Grouse, American Woodcock, Golden-winged Warbler, etc.

This proposal to manage older White Pine stands to promote Oak regeneration would be a benefit in many ways- improving forest health and diversity, improving wildlife habitat and providing forest products. The proposed approach to the Environmental Assessment- "to provide a framework for analysis for stand selection with site specific selection occurring during the implementation phase of this project"- is a common sense approach that allows the agency to be nimble in the face of volatile timber markets while providing protections that the process is intended to achieve. I applaud this effort.

If it is appropriate in this forum, I would like to answer the question about public engagement that was asked at the virtual public meeting of October 27, 2020. I did not respond as I was participating by conference call. I believe the Forest Service should adopt a "both/and" approach by holding working group meetings on pertinent subject matter and then a general meeting to update the public, including the discussions of the smaller groups. I believe the public would engage the process on different levels, from more specific to more general, and I think this approach would meet the needs of a varied group.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Tom Pratley